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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D. C. 20505

20 June 1986

The Honorable Edwin Meese III
Attorney General
Department of Justice
Washington, D. C. 20530

Dear Ed:

Pursuant to our recent conversation, I telephoned the authors and publishers of two books which are scheduled and which we believe will almost certainly contain information about communications intelligence.

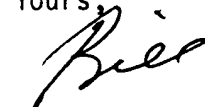
The first is being written by Bob Woodward and is to be published by Simon & Schuster. I had a non-confrontational discussion with Woodward and with Richard Snyder, the President of Simon & Schuster. I put it that I felt obliged to apprise them that any book which discussed US communications intelligence could countervene the federal statute enacted in 1950 to protect US signals capabilities. I can't say they were pleased about this but they accepted my feeling of obligation and my purpose in apprising them of our concerns. They both said they wanted to adhere to the law and would have to figure out how to balance what they considered their rights and obligations under the First Amendment with the requirements of statutory law. I said that we would be ready to see if we could help them through consulting or otherwise in their efforts to meet the details and purposes of the statute. Snyder indicated he would probably want to talk to us about that.

In the course of the conversation with Woodward, I brought up with him his previously expressed interest in having his book reviewed in order to avoid unwitting or avoidable damages. I reminded him that I had discussed this with Admiral Poindexter who was willing to make his book review apparatus available for that purpose. I left it that whenever Woodward wants to do that he would make the necessary arrangements with Paul Thompson, Admiral Poindexter's military aide.

I had a similar conversation with Seymour Hersh and Robert Loomis, who is Hersh's editor at Random House which is to publish his book. Hersh has completed a book on the KAL incident. His first reaction was that we should appreciate his work in clearing the United States of Soviet allegations that the KAL commercial transport was being used for espionage purposes. I said I was pleased to see him arrive at that conclusion, but that being acquitted of those Soviet charges was not sufficient for us to be willing to have our SIGINT capabilities damaged. Beyond that, Hersh and Loomis responded in much the same way as Woodward and Snyder at Simon & Schuster had responded.

All professed to take their national security responsibilities and legal obligations seriously and assured me they will consider carefully what they need to do in the publication of these forthcoming books.

Yours,



William J. Casey

cc: Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs